

# Ice Breaker Is Asked to End Harbor Jam

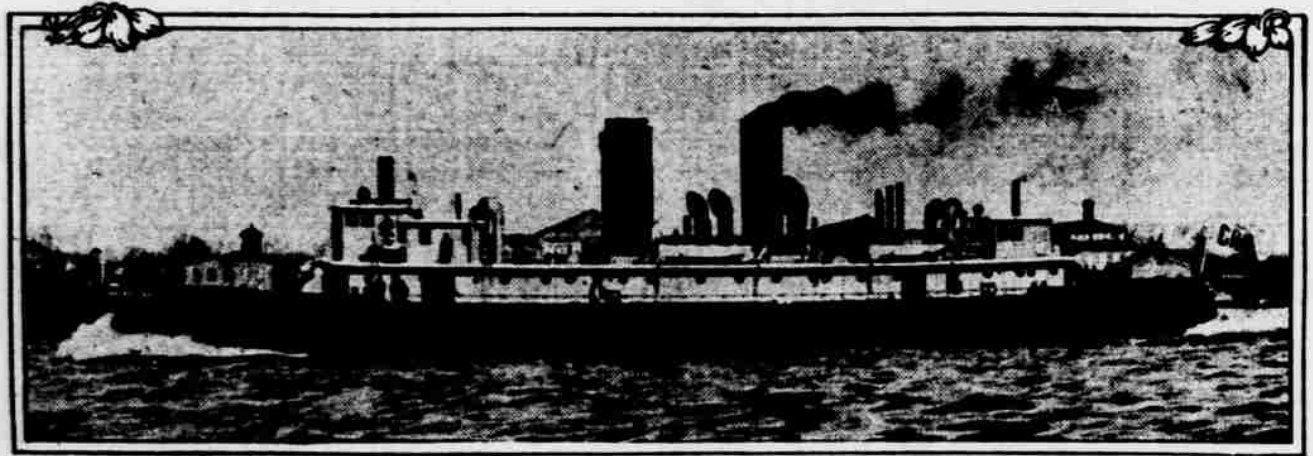
## Dock Commissioner Hulbert Takes Important Step in Effort to Prevent Fuel and Food Famines

UNTIL now New York's new Commissioner of Docks, Murray Hulbert has not been prominently mentioned as being among the men who are working with every energy to defeat the combination of icy weather and lack of coal reserve and solve the problem of bringing fuel to a shivering city. But as a matter of fact he has devoted his most earnest effort to this vital question since taking office, and has formulated one plan at least which bids fair to result in quick legislation destined to go far in safeguarding the city from a second experience with the unhappy conditions prevailing at the present moment.

As a member of the executive committee of the Mayor's Committee of Commissioners on the Fuel Situation, it has been Commissioner Hulbert's duty to give especial study to the harbor conditions affecting the transportation of coal, and he has looked at them both from the viewpoint of the interests of New York city and from the larger viewpoint of New York's importance in the Federal programme of military efficiency.

It has come to his attention that there are scores of tugboats now out of business in the harbor because of more or less serious accidents due to contact with ice. Even in normal times this decrease in hauling power would be sufficient to create considerable interruption of business; and now, when a good many tugs have been commandeered for Government service, and in view of the vastly increased demand for tugboats to move the heavy freight shipments, this shortage has become a serious problem. It has occasioned a letdown in shipping efficiency at this port, and this is due to a single factor—ice.

The Commissioner has reached the conclusion that in order to effectively safeguard the shipping and the commerce of the port—important in normal times and doubly so under the strain of war—facilities should be provided for coping with ice floes such as exist just now, so that tugs and ferryboats, barges and floats can be assured of channels cleared



A PHILADELPHIA ICE BREAKER. NOTE HIGH BATTLESHIP PROW.

of ice and their trips from one shore to another be made reasonably free from danger of any accident due to floating ice.

Acting to this end Commissioner Hulbert has forwarded to Representative Thomas F. Smith of the New York delegation in Washington the draft of a bill calling for a Federal appropriation for an ice breaking boat for the port of New York to serve both the New York and the Jersey shores, as needed. It seems a bit strange that both Philadelphia and Baltimore, which are further south than New York, have had ice boats for a number of years, and that the great port of New York has never had a publicly owned ice breaker.

The United States Government makes an annual appropriation for removing driftwood from New York harbor, and this runs to about \$30,000, the figure including cost of removing wrecks. In the opinion of the Dock Commissioner and of prominent shipping men it is not less necessary to have the ice broken up so that the tides can sweep it out from the slips and bulkheads. It is said that the salvage from an ice boat would undoubtedly go a good way toward paying for the cost and maintenance of it. When not in use as an ice breaker it could be used in the harbor fire control service.

Commissioner Hulbert's bill carries an appropriation of \$400,000, but no particular type of boat is specified in it or recommended. It is not expected that any would be ready for use before next winter, but shipping men of New York would look forward to another season like the present with far more confidence if they knew that their craft were to have this new safeguard.

It is Mr. Hulbert's opinion that while the ice breakers of Baltimore and Philadelphia are municipally owned New York's ice breaker would more properly be under Federal ownership, because of the fact that it would be used for service in the waters of two States. An

ice breaker, it was explained, is a large and powerful tug capable of resisting the impact of heavy ice cakes and with engines capable of driving her through deep floes or even through solid ice. The plates on these herculean craft are six and seven inches in thickness, as against the half inch plates of the ordinary steel tug. The driving power of an ice boat in New York harbor could be used not only to cut ice but possibly to throw water to the top of the Battery skyscrapers in case of fire.

New York harbor had a powerful tug called the Ice King last winter which, although privately owned, was available as an ice cutter when needed. But the Ice King is now in other waters with the Stars and Stripes flying at her masthead, performing important service for the nation. She was not, however, the most approved type of her kind, as her prow had what is technically known as a straight stem; that is, it cut the water in a perpendicular line. The most successful ice breakers are those having a prow shaped somewhat like a racing boat; that is, a curve that enables the prow of the boat to crowd up on the ice, so to speak, and to break it from above. The boat with the straight stemmed prow cracks the ice in lines radiating from the point of impact, but the boat with receding or curved prow smashes from above and drives the ice under. Then the hull of the boat pushes it aside and a channel is much more quickly and effectively formed.

This is the type of ice breaker used in Copenhagen and in Finnish and Baltic ports. It is the type used by the Canadian Government in the stanch little boat that plies daily in winter between Charlottetown, P. E. I., and the mainland carrying passengers and freight and breaking its way at it goes along. This was put into service about two years ago.

The largest and most powerful ice

breaker in the world is said to be the Ermaek, now in service in Archangel, Russia. It was built in an English shipyard for the Russian Government at a cost of more than a million dollars.

The city of Philadelphia maintains and operates two ice boats. No. 3, sometimes called the John Weaver, was constructed at the Cramp shipyards in 1905 at a contract price of \$400,000. This is a steel triple screw boat 234 feet long.

The other boat, known as No. 2, was constructed by the Cramps in 1868 at a contract price of \$165,000, and has been in use since that time. She is an iron paddle wheel boat 206 feet long.

When these two boats are not in service as ice breakers they are generally tied up at the city wharf, the crews being transferred to the dredging plant owned by the municipality. During the present war emergency the John Weaver was used in the harbor during the summer of 1917 as a school for educating and training marine engineers, and will serve the same purpose in the summer of 1918.

Both the Philadelphia ice breakers have been engaged this winter during the severe weather in keeping open the channel of the Delaware River to the sea, and the work has been so well accomplished that there has been no congestion on account of ice in the harbor.

In Baltimore two powerful ice boats keep the harbor open throughout the most severe winters and safely convoy vessels to and from the city.

Before sending his bill to Washington Commissioner Hulbert took pains to find out the opinion of the leading commercial organizations of the city and of well known shipping firms. A quick response of approval met his suggestion, the consensus of opinion being that had an efficient ice breaker been at work in the harbor during the few weeks just passed it would have more than paid for its initial cost through prevention of accidents and damage to shipping.

## Now Is the Time to Sign on the Dotted Line

LIFE, as the fellow says, is just one thing after another these days.

There's the — tax, real and personal, and the — questionnaire, which is just as real and a — sight more personal, and the — income tax, which is the acme of realism and the limit of personalities, and the blankety blank excess profits tax and the blank coal bin and the — automobile tax.

Elmer Gooftus, the eminent statistician of — University, has computed that the 6,000,000 persons in New York, from the time of the — State census up through and including the income tax inquisition in March, will have expended in filling out blanks energy equivalent to that required to load the available supply of coal at Jersey tidewater in knitting bags and carry it across the harbor on ferryboats.

The professor also computes that the blank lines filled in by our 6,000,000 knotted end to end would be long enough to duplicate the barbed wire entanglements defending the Allies' line from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border.

But be all these things as they may, the season is upon us when we must get out new license plates for the Ford-Arrow. The process is simple. First we note carefully the return address printed upon the envelope which brings the notice—"227 West Seventy-fourth street"—and are shouted about from local to express until we get there. Then we read the sign: "Removed to N. W. corner Broadway and Sixty-fifth street," and hoof it southward.

Trade follows the Secretary of State's flag. At Broadway and Sixty-fifth street a photographer has set up shop with a good durable lens which never backfires even after shooting the face of a Times Square taxi driver. Across the hull is an

electrical piano store with a side line of liability insurance. Upsairs is confusion.

"Line forms this way. Chauffeurs this side. Owners over here." A busy man in the centre of the floor shoos applicants this way and that, culling the sheep from the goats, as it were; the owner, of course, being the goat.

You solemnly swear this or that fill in the inevitable blanks, sign on the dotted line, ante from \$5 upward, according to the alleged horse-power of your car, and get a brown envelope full of tin. You open it with curiosity—what's the color scheme for 1918? Red and white—and your car is bright green! Oh, well,

## WAR DEVELOPS ODD FREAKS

FORTUNE tellers, crystal gazers, southsayers and many others who lay claim to the power to look into the future are making large sums in England despite the vigilance of the police. Persons with relatives at the front are the principal victims. "Prophecs" have risen all over the British Isles who foretell everything from the date of the ending of the war to the smallest details of the reconstruction period, both in Great Britain and on the Continent. Some dire predictions attracted the attention of the secret service and it was found that German gold had been prompting the sayings.

Old Moore, who can point to a long list of "predictions that came true," says in his *Almanac* of 1918 that the peace treaty will be signed in Berlin this year and adds: "As regards the future of Germany, I anticipate a revolution, an entire break up of the empire, the end of the

it can be painted over for \$50 or so.

The automobile bureau of the Secretary of State's office is one of the busiest places in all New York just now. Every car must display its new license plates on and after February 1. It is the custom of the country to put the job off until the last day, but enough owners and chauffeurs violate tradition to make things lively as early as January 15.

With nearly all the returns in for 1917 there were 177,272 sets of plates issued during the year in the ten counties of the district—Greater New York, Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland, Putnam and Westchester. Chauffeurs to the number

Hohenzollern dynasty and the ignominious flight of the Kaiser to find death in obscurity."

A WARNING issued by the Explosives Department of the British Ministry of Munitions reveals that many English girls working in munition plants are using dangerous "war paint." T N T powder is being rubbed into their hair to impart a chestnut or auburn color. The warning says: "The practice is a most dangerous one. The familiar pigmentation of the skin due to handling this explosive is not in itself a serious matter, for it wears off after a time; but the skin is a great absorber of poison, and toxic jaundice and dermatitis may result. Those continually 'doping' the scalp and roots of the hair with T N T would lay themselves open to this obstinate complaint, but apart from this the effect of the stuff on their hair cells and tissue is in no way persistent."

of 93,341 were licensed and operators numbering 86,846. It is a curious thing that while every member of a family who ever drives the car must take out an operator's license under the new law the sum total of chauffeurs and operators outnumbered by only about 3,000 the total of pleasure and commercial vehicles.

Probably every one knows that certain numbers are reserved for public officials and others who are favored by the Secretary of State. But not every one knows what they are. From 1 to 2,900 plain, from 1-D to 2,000-D and from 1-E to 1,000-E.

Many are the superstitions encountered in making up these lists. Gov. Whitman has numbers 1 and 2. Several owners beg for 17, or any number with 17 in it. Another owner solemnly protested he'd sell his car if he couldn't change his plate with 17 on it. "Some won't have anything with 13 in it, while others beg just as hard for some number embodying the jinx 1-3 combination."

The war of course has had its effect on the automobile bureau. For one thing it is hard to get the necessary blanks. Many notices to motorists were sent out telling them to get their new license plates, but not enclosing the notice that a new operator's license also is necessary February 1.

This led to considerable confusion, but it is being rectified as fast as blanks can be secured.

For another thing help is hard to get. The January rush calls for about twenty-five extra girls in the office, typists and clerks. Issuing licenses to 180,000 is a big business. It is profitable too. In 1916 the State collected \$1,262,000 from this district. Last year in round numbers it took in \$1,000,000 more than that.

Fill out your blanks and come across!